

*This search ended in July, 2006, with the appointment of Charles Hiteshew, deputy director of the DC Education Compact in Washington, DC, and previously executive director of the Public Education Partnership Fund in Washington, DC, and executive director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tarrant County in Fort Worth, Texas.*

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## **Job Announcement**

### **America's Promise Chief Operating Officer** (Posted: May 3, 2006)

America's Promise: The Alliance for Youth in Alexandria, Virginia, has retained Slesinger Management Services to recruit a seasoned leader and manager to serve as chief operating officer. A new position, reporting to the organization's President and Chief Executive Officer, the COO's primary responsibility will be to work in partnership with the CEO to ensure the successful implementation of the Alliance's new five-year strategic plan. The COO will serve as the organization's number two person and, in concert with the CEO, will oversee all senior leadership and all functions of the organization. This new structure will enable the CEO to focus more externally on alliance partnerships, strategic opportunities, resource development, and relationships with board members, trustees, grantmakers, and investors.

Applications will be accepted until this search is completed.

### **The Organization**

America's Promise is a nonprofit alliance whose mission is to mobilize corporations, other nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and communities throughout the United States to ensure that every child has five resources required to succeed. These resources, to be considered promises America makes to its youngest citizens, are:

1. Caring adults: where ongoing relationships with parents, mentors, tutors, or coaches offer children support, care, and guidance.
2. Safe places: where there are structured activities that provide opportunities for children to learn and grow.
3. Healthy start: where adequate nutrition, exercise, and health care pave the way for healthy bodies, healthy minds, and smart habits for adulthood.
4. Effective education: where youth obtain marketable skills that help them navigate the transition from school to work successfully.
5. Opportunities to help others: where opportunities to give back through service enhance self-esteem, boost confidence, and heighten a sense of responsibility to the community.

The America's Promise Alliance was founded after the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, held in Philadelphia in 1997. Presidents Clinton, Bush, Carter and Ford, with First Lady Nancy Reagan representing her husband, challenged the nation to make children and youth a national priority and fulfill the five promises for every child. President George W. Bush reaffirmed that

commitment in 2001. The unprecedented gathering — co-sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Points of Light Foundation, and United Way of America—brought together governors, mayors, community delegations, business and faith leaders, and several thousand concerned citizens.

Today, the America's Promise Alliance, which began under the leadership of founding chairman General Colin Powell, and is now chaired by Alma Powell, brings together communities, individuals, companies, and organizations from all sectors to improve the odds for children and youth. Its president and CEO is Marguerite Sallee, who joined the organization in 2004 after a distinguished career in business and government. Based in Alexandria, Virginia, the organization has a staff of 37 and a budget of \$16 million. Revenue comes primarily from grants from foundations and corporations, and the federal government.

The new strategic plan, which will guide the America's Promise Alliance's work over the next five years, has one overarching goal: to change the lives of 15 million underserved young people through the power of the five promises. This will be accomplished by:

- Securing commitments from Alliance partners to reach more children with more of the five promises;
- Raising awareness of the needs of children; and
- Fostering greater collaboration to help meet those needs.

In addition, the new strategic plan outlines three current Alliance initiatives that will help the Alliance achieve its goal of changing the lives of 15 million young people:

1. Every Child, Every Promise: a report that will measure the presence of the five promises in young people's lives.
2. 100 Best Communities for Young People: a competition that will recognize successful community collaborations and share best practices, thereby encouraging more collaborative efforts throughout the country.
3. Katrina's Kids: an initiative in selected cities to help see that the children and youth affected by Hurricane Katrina receive the five promises and, in so doing, to demonstrate more effective ways for Alliance partners to collaborate.

The America's Promise Alliance is also the home of FirstFocus, a new bipartisan policy initiative that seeks to mobilize policy makers at the federal and state levels to make children and families more of a national priority. The COO will work with the CEO of FirstFocus to ensure a high level of coordination and an open flow of information between FirstFocus and America's Promise staff to ensure the two entities support each other's mission and objectives, particularly as they relate to advocacy, to the greatest extent possible.

For more information about the America's Promise Alliance, please go to [www.AmericasPromise.org](http://www.AmericasPromise.org).

### **The Position and its Principal Responsibilities**

Working in close partnership with the president and CEO to help realize the vision and mission of the America's Promise Alliance, the chief operating officer will be responsible for:

1. Implementing the new, five-year strategic plan, which, among other things, requires the development of annual operating plans and financial plans, and careful coordination among the various departments of the organization and across the Alliance.
2. Ensuring the successful day-to-day operation of the organization. In this capacity, all senior staff will report to the COO, but will continue to have significant access to and interaction with the CEO as well.
3. Under the CEO's direction, ensuring effective integration into the day-to-day operations and the annual planning process new developments in the organization's external relations, including those involving alliance partnerships, strategic opportunities, and new resources.
4. Helping to develop relationships with peers at organizations that are part of the America's Promise's Alliance to insure that the Alliance continues to grow and become more effective.

### **Desired Skills and Characteristics**

As the person overseeing much of the internal operations of the America's Promise Alliance as well as its programmatic work that often involves significant participation by Alliance members, the chief operating officer should be:

1. Able to forge strong, effective working relationships across the Alliance partnerships.
2. Capable of leading, motivating, and supervising senior staff who have highly specialized knowledge of their areas of responsibility.
3. Capable of creating and running reporting systems to insure that activities that involve multiple departments or organizations get done on time, within budget, at a high level of quality, and lead to successful, measurable outcomes.
4. Adept in working with the chief financial officer to analyze and communicate financial information and other quantitative data that will form the basis of key decisions to be made by the board, president and CEO, or senior management team about the America's Promise Alliance activities.
5. Effective in keeping grantmakers informed about the organization's progress and ensuring compliance with legal and reporting requirements.
6. Supportive of team-based, collaborative management that is based on open and free-flowing communication, extensive sharing of information, and participatory decision-making. This is especially important at a relatively small organization that is committed to working through an alliance that includes diverse and often large and powerful organizations from the corporate, nonprofit, and public sectors.
7. An excellent communicator, in writing and orally.
8. A person with enough maturity, confidence, and presence to be able to work effectively with dynamic and active board members.
9. A trusted, complementary partner of the CEO who not only improves her effectiveness, but that of the entire organization.
10. Committed to the mission of the America's Promise Alliance. Prior professional experience working with children and youth is clearly desirable, but is not required.

### **Experience**

The ideal chief operating officer will have at least 10 years of broad-based senior management experience, ideally at national organizations that have major roles within successful alliances or coalitions. Significant experience with both program management and financial management is highly desirable.

## **Compensation**

Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications. America's Promise offers a generous benefits package.

## **To Apply**

Please **e-mail** (or mail) 1) cover letter that explains why you're interested and qualified, 2) resume, and 3) three-year salary history (which will be held in strict confidence) to:

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(please include "America's Promise" in subject line; attached files in Microsoft Word or PDF only)

(This job announcement can also be found at [www.SlesingerManagement.com](http://www.SlesingerManagement.com).)

*America's Promise is an Equal Opportunity Employer.*